



**Homeland  
Security**

# Fact Sheet

December 1, 2003  
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## CHANGES TO NATIONAL SECURITY ENTRY/EXIT REGISTRATION SYSTEM (NSEERS)

The Department of Homeland Security has decided to suspend the National Security Entry/Exit Registration System (NSEERS) re-registration requirement that mandated aliens to re-register after 30-days and one year of continuous presence in the United States. The new process is outlined in the interim rule published in the Federal Register.

NSEERS established a national registry for temporary foreign visitors (non-immigrant aliens) arriving from certain countries, or who meet a combination of intelligence-based criteria, and are identified as presenting an elevated national security concern. The program has collected detailed information about the background and purpose of an individual's visit to the United States, the periodic verification of their location and activities, and departure confirmation. NSEERS was the first step taken by the Department of Justice and then DHS in order to comply with the development of the Congressionally- mandated requirement for a comprehensive entry-exit program by 2005.

The domestic registration program included citizens or nationals from Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Egypt, Eritrea, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. However, to date, individuals from more than 150 countries have been registered in the NSEERS program.

Most of the foreign visitors registered are students, individuals in the U.S. on extended business travel, or individuals visiting family members for lengthy periods. The requirement to register does not apply to U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents (green card holders), refugees, asylum applicants, asylum grantees, and diplomats or others admitted under "A" or "G" visas.

At the time of initial registration, all individuals were given instructions that they had to re-register in one year, or after thirty days if initially registered at a port-of-entry. The numbers who were to re-register were expected to vary from last year because some individuals may have left the country; traveled outside and back into the country (changing their one-year anniversary date to the most recent entry registration date); or adjusted their status, eliminating the need for re-registration.

### **Previous Re-Registration Requirements:**

- All individuals registered under NSEERS were required to re-register after thirty days if initially registered at a port-of-entry, and annually if they are remaining in the United States past one year. This notice was given to individuals at the time of registration, either at a designated port of entry or a Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services office.
- The annual anniversary date for re-registration is based on the last time that an individual registered.
  - The annual interview requirements of those individuals subject to the first call-in registration, which began on November 15, 2002, began November 5, 2003.
  - The annual interviews of those individuals who registered at a port of entry, beginning September 11, 2002, began on the one-year anniversary of their date of registration.
- Individuals have a ten-day window in which to show up for their annual interview. In other words, they can report for their interview within ten days after their anniversary date.
- Those individuals required to report for their yearly interview were expected to return to the same office at which they registered last year. If they had moved, they would go to the nearest ICE or CIS office or sub-office. The willful failure to do so is a criminal violation of the Immigration and Nationality Act, and the willful failure to register also would render an alien deportable.
- The NSEERS program is a valuable first step towards a more comprehensive entry-exit system – US-VISIT. Congress mandated that a comprehensive entry-exit program be developed by 2005.

### **Changes Made By the New Rule:**

- There will no longer be a 30-day or one-year re-registration requirement, effective with the publishing of the new rule in the Federal Register.
- In place of the previous requirement, the new rule will allow DHS, as a matter of discretion, to notify individual nonimmigrant aliens subject to NSEERS registration to appear for one or more additional continuing registration interviews in those particular cases where it may be necessary to determine whether the alien is complying with the conditions of his or her nonimmigrant visa status and admission.
- The rule also provides that when an alien who is monitored under Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) notifies DHS of a change of address or change of educational institution through SEVIS, it also constitutes a notification for the purposes of NSEERS registration.

## **NSEERS Background:**

- On September 11, 2002, the U.S. began implementation of NSEERS at U.S. ports of entry. On November 5, 2002, the domestic call-in registration began. Congress required the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to implement a comprehensive entry-exit program in 1996. That system must be in place by 2005. NSEERS is the first step in fulfilling that Congressional mandate.
- NSEERS promotes several important national security objectives:
  - (1) NSEERS allows the United States to run the fingerprints of aliens who may present elevated national security concerns against a database of wanted criminals and known terrorists;
  - (2) NSEERS enables DHS to determine instantly when such an alien has overstayed his visa, which was the case with three of the 9/11 hijackers);
  - (3) NSEERS enables DHS to verify that an alien in the United States on a temporary visa is doing what he said he would be doing, and living where he said he would live.
- The countries prioritized for special registration were selected because:
  - (1) All of these countries are places where Al-Qaeda or other terrorist organizations have been active, or where the United States has other national security concerns;
  - (2) This was not an exclusive list—all non-immigrant visitors from other countries eventually will be included as the US-VISIT program is implemented.

## **NSEERS General Information:**

- The majority of those required to register under NSEERS complied and fulfilled this requirement successfully. It is the individual's responsibility to comply with US immigration law and maintain legal status while in the United States.
- There were a small number of individuals who temporarily were kept in detention while they were processed for immigration violations during the domestic enrollment portion of the program.
- As of September 30, 2003, individuals from 150 countries have complied with the NSEERS registration requirements for a total of 290,526 registrations, which includes those registering both at Ports-of-Entry (POEs) and the former INS district offices nationwide. The registrations performed are broken down in the following way: 207,007 registrations (93,741 individuals) at the POEs, and 83,519 individuals at the former INS offices.
- NSEERS requirements applied only to certain non-immigrant aliens. These requirements do NOT include U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents (green card holders), refugees, asylum applicants (who filed before November 22, 2002), asylum grantees, and diplomats or others admitted under A or G visas.
- European countries have had similar registration systems in place for decades.



**NSEERS Statistics Through September 30, 2003:**

Total Number of Registrations: 290,526

Total Number of Individuals Registered: 177,260

Port-of-Entry Registration

Total Port of Entry Registration: 207,007

Number of Individuals: 93,741

Domestic Registration

Total Domestic Registrations: 83,519

Referred to Investigation

Notices to Appear Issued: 13,799

Total Number Detained: 2,870

Total Number In Custody: 23

Total Number of Criminals: 143